



# July/August 2021 THE MESSENGER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF BELMONT

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Twenty-five youth and adults from CCB took on the rapids of the South Fork of the American River on June 26 and all returned safely with great stories to tell. Read the article and see more photos on Pages 4 and 5.

## Pastor Liz offers her vision for CCB's future

By Pastor Elizabeth Clement

My service among you as interim pastor is coming to an end, and what a time it has been! Also, what a blessing and honor. This time with you has instructed and deepened commitment to my own vocation in service to the church. I have learned so much about you and from you that that we can all raise our voices to give thanks. Or even say, Hallelujah! Thanks be to God!

A year ago, I wrote in these pages, "The quality of our shared experience in completing the interim work will, I believe, ensure the quality of the outcomes." (The Messenger, June 2020) Not to say, "I told you so," but the quality of our time together at the Congregational Church of



Pastor Liz Clement

Belmont over the last months has been rich, challenging and wonderful.

Even as we navigated our new relationship and the COVID-19 pandemic, we made time for cultivating the rich ground of personal stories and relationships, developing the ability to learn and discern together, so as to move into action together as a congregation.

The time between one settled pastor and the next can be especially rich for playing in the soil, digging around to see what's underneath all the activity (or lack of it) that we can see. And I asked you all to "go deep" and all who could have done just that. (So sorry you can't see my happy dance over here.) As an interim, among my responsibilities

is to notice, name and nurture the gifts of grace and (especially) leadership that I see in members. I believe that, fundamentally, this is the work of congregations. I hope I have done this, and I believe we have done this together in our walk over the months, making faith-sense of life as it happens — even when everything "normal" falls apart! — between Sacraments.

Now, as I take my leave, here are a few specific thoughts about what I see — Pastor Liz's vision for CCB, if you will:


- Rest a while...and see what will grow here. Give yourselves and your "main thing" time to breathe and replenish and sprout what can/will grow from the talents, resources and deep commitments that CCB has in abundance. Living, growing systems require time and Sabbath. *Everything that is needed is here.*

- "Cultivate the soil" and the deep roots

See PASTOR LIZ, Page 6

We are an Open and Affirming Congregation valuing everyone's race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, class, physical and mental abilities.

What are we called to do?



“A little church on the top of a hill that extends its arms out into its community and spreads love”

How are we energized to fulfill this calling? Vote below!

Social Action	Community Outreach	Youth	Music and Art	Spiritual Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Address housing insecurity with affordable housing</li> <li>Give money to the needy</li> <li>Help undocumented people</li> <li>Plant a food forest</li> <li>Incubate non-profits</li> <li>Address the digital divide</li> <li>Green, eco-centered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular community events organized by our admin</li> <li>Host a food festival</li> <li>Chocolate Fest</li> <li>Multicultural events</li> <li>Social events</li> <li>Host classes – exercise and learning</li> <li>Grow our community presence</li> <li>Spend time with “church family”</li> <li>Build a park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build a strong youth group</li> <li>Nurturing youth programs</li> <li>Family fun day</li> <li>Youth trips</li> <li>Tutoring with computer help</li> <li>Family camp</li> <li>Boba hour</li> <li>Safe teen space</li> <li>Build a youth program bigger than CCB</li> <li>Improv</li> <li>Attract families, particularly diverse families</li> <li>Teach children to be questioning adults</li> <li>Baking</li> <li>Build a youth non-profit incubator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain and grow our strong music program</li> <li>Dance lessons</li> <li>Informal singing group</li> <li>Build a good concert venue/performance space</li> <li>Host a speaker series</li> <li>Children’s choir</li> <li>Adult choir</li> <li>Build a center for the arts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain UCC alignment</li> <li>Host bible study</li> <li>Be open and affirming</li> <li>Spiritual exploration (not “religious”)</li> <li>Explore the meaning of life</li> <li>Host a spiritual development speaker series</li> <li>Micah 6:8 identity</li> <li>Focus: personal transformation</li> <li>Be a progressive center</li> <li>Become a multifaith center</li> <li>Deaffiliate from UCC</li> <li>Host worship service with variety, spirit, engagement</li> <li>Focus on soul work</li> <li>Build a “thoughtful spot” or labyrinth</li> </ul>

Voting directions:  
 ★ Blue sticker: what you feel will sustain our congregation  
 ★ Green sticker: what is your personal passion  
 ★ Yellow sticker: what do you think will draw people in

Thanks to the congregation’s help in the past month, the visioning committee has collected some fantastic input about where our energies lie and where we feel the church should focus in our next journey. The poster above provided the opportunity for members to vote for the church programs that they want to put their energy into. The visioning committee will now take this input to craft job descriptions for our church leadership structure and complete our local church profile. We expect it to take two to three months to complete those role definitions, and at least six months to find the right person to lead us after that. Stand by!

## Council is considering calling bridge pastor for next phase

So what happens now?  
 Pastor Liz’s last Sunday will be Aug. 1, and the Church Council is planning for the months between Pastor Liz and the arrival of our next settled pastor.  
 The best thinking on Council right now is to bring in a bridge minister who will help us through this final phase of solidifying our vision and path forward, creating a local church profile, and handling pastoral duties while we identify our next pastor.  
 The Pastoral Search Committee is talking with Rev. Sally Train, who was with us for a few months before Pastor Liz arrived,

about returning in the role of “bridge pastor” during that period.  
 “It’s looking promising so far but there are several logistics we need to work out over the next few weeks,” Greg Thornhill, Pastoral Search chair, said.  
 “One of the ideas that Council is mulling is whether we might want to have pulpit supply a couple of Sundays per month to allow our bridge minister time to help us work through our remaining visioning process.”  
 It’s possible we may need to invite pulpit supply pastors to fill in until the bridge pastor is in place. With luck, it won’t be long.

**First Sunday Walking Group will head for Water Dog Lake Sunday, July 4! Gather at 2:30 p.m. at the upper end of Lake Road Trail, off Hallmark, in Belmont.**

To go to the Congregational Church of Belmont website, click on [CCB](#).



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# Twenty-five CCB rafters take on the rapids

By Danielle Chamberlin

The church youth had a fantastic trip up to the South Fork of the American River on June 26. We had 25 people attending, including two parents and seven youth from outside our church who are friends of ours.

It was a first-time rafting experience for most, including many of the parents. Some extra-exciting adventures were had through the class III rapids with five of our rafters taking an unexpected swim, but no one was injured. (Class II and III are all “swimmable” rapids.) Afterwards, the youth were talking about what river they want to raft next time.

We are getting geared up for Family Camp on July 16-18. We arrive after dinner on Friday and enjoy the evening with a campfire. On Saturday we’re excited to have the climbing wall available for our youth for the first time! We’ll also have time for talent show and skits, and maybe even a water balloon fight again. Monte Toyon will prepare all our meals on Saturday and breakfast on Sunday. After breakfast Sunday morning, we will enjoy a beautiful outdoor worship service before we leave.

The youth are trying to organize themselves (with a bit of guidance from BCE) to host a benefit concert on our front lawn in to support the Trevor Project, which supports



LGBTQ youth. It is an ambitious undertaking, but we’re happy to support them. No date has been set for the concert.

Attendance on Sunday mornings has been low for children under 12, despite our offering child care. We are not sure if this is because of Covid concerns for families with unvaccinated children or other reasons. Lea has been calling our families to find out what

we could do better. From initial feedback we have brought back the old-style Time with Children, with children coming up to the front and ringing the bells. We’re still working on camera angles to avoid streaming individuals unwittingly.

Our older youth have requested Sunday School be brought back for them as well, which we will look into.

# Special Offering helps buy school backpacks

By Linda Howard

Remember those envelopes in the pews that had Special Offerings printed on the front? Now that worship has returned to the Sanctuary, the Special Offerings have been reinstated.

Congregants again will have the opportunity to contribute to good causes throughout the year.

The Social Action committee discussed what areas might be considered for Special Offerings. Locally, we decided upon the following:

- Samaritan House/Special Requests
- The Crop Walk
- Puente De La Sur
- Family to Family

In addition to local needs, the Social Action Committee will choose two other outreach programs of the United Church of Christ. These will be determined later.

Our first Special Offering appeal will be the Samaritan House Backpack Drive. Children deserve everything they need to learn and return to school with confidence. Part of this confidence comes from shiny new school supplies. In the past, we’ve purchased and filled backpacks ourselves, but this year Samaritan House will ask for donations online or by check.

This year’s backpack giveaway will take place in early August. Families will have the opportunity to pick up brand-new backpacks filled with school supplies during a designated drive-through time slot. The goal is to distribute more than 2,000 new backpacks with school supplies to students throughout San Mateo County.

The Backpack Drive is direct support for education of our community’s children. Access to education is social justice in action!

The deadline for all backpack contribu-

tions will be July 30. Donations can be made in three ways: Special Offering envelopes found in the pews, on-line, or by sending a check to the church office. Be sure and write Samaritan House Backpacks on the memo line.

## Help make sandwiches for Open Cathedral on Aug. 29

CCB will provide sack lunches for San Francisco’s Open Cathedral ministry to the homeless every fifth Sunday.

So please come early for church at 9:30 a.m. to make PB&J sandwiches and pack the lunches. It takes about an hour to produce 120 lunches, and Valerie McEntee picks them up and takes them to Golden Gate Park where they are distributed.

It’s a great opportunity to practice social justice.

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**Pastor Liz and her cousin Schery Mitchell James sing *You've Got a Friend* at the June 27 worship service. Many members of Pastor Liz's extended California family were on hand for worship and a barbecue lunch in the Dining Room. This was the first time they were able to be all together since the Shelter-in-Place order.**

## Pastor Liz

Continued from Page one

you have in the congregation and in the Belmont community. Grow the love and joy that is so visible in this congregation until it draws others in. The excellent visioning work you have done is also an excellent fertilizer for this. *Everything that is needed is here.*

- The CCB tree logo is a metaphor that can generate endless possibilities for “the little church on the hill, branching out and gathering in.” Bigger is not better. (Remember what Jesus did with 12.) *Everything that is needed is here.*

- Continue to grow awareness of the quality of discussion and decision-making that permits moving forward together toward a shared vision. This has always been a challenge in our UCC polity and will require attention and intention. Get the help you need to make this work for CCB. *Everything that is needed is here.*

Is it time for the last word already? Yikes. Well, all I can say is thank you, CCB, for everything. I will miss you even as I thank God for you and pray for you and your ministry here for years to come.

Until we meet again, I wish you grace upon grace.

## Ritual of Release sends Camp Cazadero into new hands

By Elane Johnson

About 150 people, including Sarah Fernald of CCB, gathered at Camp Cazadero June 12 for a Ritual of Release as we prepare to sell this beloved property to Shelterwood Collective. It was a wonderful opportunity for people to laugh and cry and share and remember.

During the Ritual of Release, led by Revs. Curran Reichert and Char Asher, we were reminded of God’s continued presence both in the memories and in the moment as well as with those who will experience this camp into the future.

A worship service at Vesper Point included an opportunity to lay flowers of gratitude on the altar as participants came up to receive Communion. Favorite camp songs and sharing of laughter, tears and memories made the service and the entire day a tender time of togetherness.

Notes of gratitude, memory, and wishes for Shelterwood were also part of the day



**Sarah Fernald at Camp Caz June 12**

as was a special lunch provided by nearby church members.

Karen Yvonne Elvy Johnson, who, at the last minute, was unable to attend, sent an email with her reflections of the sale.

“Initially I felt a seriously deep sense of loss at even the thought of Caz leaving UCC, but the transfer is really just like selling a house when everyone else has grown up and moved away and what’s left is a truly-too-large building for just one or two people.

“It’s totally right to release Caz to a new family who can fill it and use it. We are only releasing the physical property – not our decades of memories, life affirmations, nature connections, friendships, loves, spiritual awakenings, skills learned, creativity explored, delightfully age-less sense of play, nor anything else that made Camp Caz special to each and all of us.

“People move, die, change – but they are always ‘with’ us whenever we remember them. The same is true for Camp Caz.”

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Peninsula Multifaith Coalition presents:  
A Summer of "Good Trouble"

# DAYS OF ADVOCACY IN HONOR OF JOHN LEWIS

Wednesday, June 30th at 7:00 pm  
Book Discussion of "March: Book 1"  
by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell  
Zoom Event

Save  
the  
Dates

Saturday, July 17th at 7:30 pm  
Discussion and Showing of  
the Movie "Good Trouble"  
LDS Church Parking Lot, Foster City

Sunday, August 15th, 1:00-3:00 pm  
Multifaith Gathering. Prayer Service,  
Poster Making, Anti-Racism March  
Central Park, San Mateo

"When you see something that is not right, not  
fair, not just, you have to speak up. You have to  
say something; you have to do something."



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## Are you ready for in-person version of Chocolate Fest this October?

Chocolate Fest was a virtual affair last year, but we think we may be ready for a modified version of the real thing Oct. 8 and 9.

Danielle Chamberlin and Greg Thornhill are game to give it a go as chairs with help from Admin Lea.

But they need to know if others are eager to try as well. Most specifically, they need people who will be responsible for decorating, staffing, prizes and the boutique.

We need to hear how involved you would be willing to be this year — and if you are willing to do some things but not others.

Please email Lea at [Office@ccbmont.org](mailto:Office@ccbmont.org) and let her know how you feel about Chocolate Fest in person this October.



### Furniture for free! Just take it away!

A very nice set of rattan furniture that Pastor Kristi acquired for her office (and that Pastor Liz used as an outdoor sitting space on the veranda during the shelter-in-place order) is available for the taking. CCB has events planned and needs the veranda back! Contact Lea and take it away!

**September Messenger deadline will be Friday, Aug. 27**



## Save the Date!

**We are planning a goodbye party for Pastor Liz from 6-8 p.m. Saturday, July 31, in the CCB Dining Room and Veranda. Rumor has it that dancing is involved!**

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